USDA NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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NEBRASKA'S MARCH 1, 2005 PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS

LINCOLN, Neb., March 31, 2005 -- Nebraska producers expect to increase acreage devoted to corn, hay, dry edible beans, oats, and sunflowers, decrease acreage planted to winter wheat (sown last fall), sorghum, and sugar beets, while leaving soybean acreage unchanged from a year ago, according to USDA's Nebraska Agricultural Statistics Service.

Nebraska corn growers expect to plant 8.4 million acres in 2005, up 2 percent from last year and up 4 percent from two years ago.

Expected plantings of soybeans, at 4.8 million acres, would be unchanged from last year. This would tie for second highest on record, behind only the 4.95 million acres planted in 2001.

Last fall, winter wheat was sown on 1.8 million acres, down 3 percent from a year earlier and down 5 percent from two years ago.

Sorghum growers expect to plant 390,000 acres, 29 percent less than 2004 and 41 percent less than 2003.

Hay acreage for harvest, at 2.85 million, would be up 2 percent from last year. Dry edible bean producers intend to plant 160,000 acres, up 33 percent from a year earlier. Oat planting intentions, at 150,000 acres, are up 7 percent from 2004. Sunflower planting intentions, at 95,000 acres, are up 70 percent while sugar beet plantings of 49,000 acres would be down 2 percent from a year ago.

These acreage estimates are based on surveys conducted the first two weeks of March. This report is intended to assist growers in finalizing their acreage plans for 2005. Actual area planted may vary from that indicated due to final farmer assessment of planting options, the effects of weather, availability of production inputs, and changes in expected prices for 2005 crops.

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